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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 29 November 1990, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal)

- International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Today the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is holding a solemn meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, of 2 December 1977.

It is my great honour and pleasure to welcome His Excellency Mr. Guido de Marco, President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session; His Excellency Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General of the United Nations; His Excellency Mr. Daya Perera, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories; Mr. Ronald Spiers, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services; and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, acting Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations. I should also like to welcome representatives of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, members of the press and all those who accepted the Committee's invitation to participate in this solemn meeting.

I now invite everyone here to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have given their lives for the cause of the Palestinian people.

The participants observed a minute of silence.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I should like now to make a statement on behalf of the Committee.

Today we commemorate once again the adoption by the General Assembly, on 29 November 1947, of resolution 181 (II), which partitioned the historic land of Palestine between two communities, the Arabs and the Jews, and provided for the creation of two independent States joined in economic union and a special international régime for Jerusalem. Perhaps no other resolution in the 45-year history of the United Nations has had so deep and long-lasting an impact, not only on the history and lives of two peoples, but also on an entire region and the international community at large.

Subsequently, as we all know, Israel proclaimed its independence pursuant to General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and became a Member of the United Nations in May 1949. The Arab State envisaged in the resolution, however, has not yet come into existence. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were made refugees in the war of 1947 and again in 1967. Today, over 3 million Palestinians live in host countries, prevented from returning home. Another one and a half million live under Israeli military occupation in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Over half of the total estimated Palestinian population are refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), living in camps under conditions of hardship and insecurity, dependent on the generosity of the international community for their most basic needs.

The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity traditionally provides an opportunity for our Committee, together with other States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations bodies, not only to reaffirm our support for the Palestinian people, but also to pledge

(The Chairman)

ourselves to intensify our common efforts towards a peaceful resettlement of this question so that the Palestinian people can finally rejoin the community of nations as full participants.

On 15 November 1988, the Palestine National Council declared the independence of the State of Palestine in the land of Palestine, with its capital at Jerusalem, on the basis of resolution 181 (II), which guarantees the Palestinian Arab people the right to sovereignty and national independence. Our Committee has welcomed the declaration of independence and the Palestinian peace initiative launched subsequently as an important contribution to the achievement of a just and lasting peace, and has called for Palestine to be accorded its rightful place within the international community, including the United Nations system. The declaration of independence of Palestine has been recognized by over 100 States. Participants in the seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations organized under the auspices of our Committee in the various regions, including participants from Israel, have voiced overwhelming support for the "two peoples, two States" formula.

Moreover, General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, which called, inter alia, for Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and for security guarantees for all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II), was adopted by an unprecedented majority of 151 votes to 3, with one abstention.

It is clear, therefore, that the international community overwhelmingly supports a settlement based on the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has strongly deplored the fact that Israel has continued to reject the international legitimacy embodied in the partition resolution, despite its earlier

(The Chairman)

acceptance of it, to occupy the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and constantly and persistently to change their legal status, geographical nature and demographic composition, as well as to exploit their natural resources. These policies and practices are in violation of numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, which are binding on Member States, including Israel. The Israeli occupation of their land, always resisted by the Palestinian people, has become increasingly repressive and violent since the beginning of the intifadah, the latest stage in the struggle of the Palestinian people to realize its national rights, in particular its right to self-determination, national independence and national sovereignty.

The intifadah has made absolutely clear not only that the Palestinian people rejects the occupation, but also that the partition of Palestine has already occurred in practice. Let me quote from an article by a distinguished former Foreign Minister of Israel, who was also closely involved in the United Nations debates at the time of the creation of Israel, Mr. Abba Eban. Shortly after the beginning of the intifadah, he wrote:

> "The principle of partition is so profoundly inscribed in the Israeli-Palestinian territorial fabric that it has survived 20 years of Israeli occupation.
>
> "To move from a zone where Israeli law applies to a zone under military occupation is to change from one world to another. Not for a single minute out of the 24 hours of the day do the million and a half Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip share the same emotional experience, the same dream, the same prayer as the Jews who live in the zone under Israeli sovereignty. Nowhere else in the world is there a political entity characterized by such a total discontinuity as that between the two zones and their populations.

(The Chairman)

"Neither of these two human worlds seeks harmony with the other by trying to work with their specific characteristics."

This reality on the ground, noted by many others, makes it certain that Palestinian resistance will continue as long as the Israeli occupation continues and that eventually Israel will have to face this reality. The sooner the Government of Israel ends its rejection of United Nations resolutions, particularly those of the Security Council, recognizes Palestinian rights and rejoins the international community in the efforts towards a peaceful settlement, the better it will be for both Palestinians and Israelis. The high level of casualties among the Palestinians, the hardships they have endured during these three years of the intifadah and the increasing impact the intifadah is having on the political system and stability of Israel itself, demonstrate that the present situation is not only unjust, but also unsustainable.

The current situation of deep mistrust, violence and even hatred between the two communities is clearly a disastrous result of the prolonged occupation, increasing repression and lack of progress towards a peaceful settlement. Our Committee is extremely concerned about these developments, which are taking place at a time of heightened tension due to the crisis in the Gulf. Each day it is more necessary and urgent for the United Nations to become involved, not only to provide the needed protection for Palestinians, but also to help defuse tensions and build confidence between the two sides as a first step towards a genuine peace process.

The Committee appeals once again to the Security Council to address the question of Palestine with the same urgency and determination that it has shown with regard to the Gulf crisis, with a view to finding a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine.

(The Chairman)

I shall conclude by quoting the words of a well-known and respected Palestinian journalist, Mr. Hanna Siniora:

"The only road - the one both sides in the conflict must travel together - is the road of dialogue, negotiation and mutual consensus. A compromise solution may not satisfy everyone on either side, but it will preserve the future for the next generations and will enable the two peoples to begin the process of healing and rebuilding together. The participation of those who now fear that approach is as essential as that of those who already believe in it".

I strongly hope that those words of moderation and realism will not have been said in vain. As we reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestinian people today, let us also jointly uphold and strengthen our commitment to finding ways and means to ensure the achievement of a just peace that respects and guarantees the needs and interests of all sides, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.

I now call on the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Guido de Marco.

Mr. DE MARCO (President of the General Assembly): Once again, the international community is assembled to reaffirm its solidarity with the Palestinian people. This is an emotive and meangingful occasion, serving to underline our commitment to persevering in the collective effort aimed at ensuring that the Palestinian people achieve its basic and inalienable right to its own homeland where it can pursue its destiny in dignity, freedom and peace.

This year, perhaps to a greater extent than in previous years, the Palestinian people turns to us assembled here proclaiming solidarity with it, to enquire about the practical implications of our declarations.

At a time when the world is moving so dramatically from confrontation to co-operation, when the international community has for the first time in many years so impressively united to thwart an act of aggression by one neighbour against

(Mr. de Marco, President, General Assembly)

another, the Palestinian people is asking how that new spirit of co-operation is going to apply to its case. How are the new high moral standards in international affairs going to be translated into effective action to redress the injustices to which the Palestinians have been subjected for so long?

On a commemorative occasion like the one in which we are participating today, the human dimension of the problem is also the one that demands our immediate concern. The tragedy that we are all called to examine is that of a people which, in the turbulence of historical events, has been left totally dispossessed of the homeland to which all aspire; and yet a people which, in the midst of tragedy and injustice, has retained its sense of dignity and nationhood and the collective determination to pursue its legitimate objective until it is finally achieved.

Many of the first generation of Palestinians caught in the events that led to their diaspora are today dead. Some may have believed that with the passage of time the original wounds of dispossession would heal and that a new generation of Palestinians would perhaps eventually resign itself to a subjugation that would by then appear to be irremediable.

Nothing could have been more mistaken. New generations of Palestinians have arisen to take up the struggle where their elders left off. For the Palestinian people, the intifadah is a symbol of that indomitable element of the human spirit that refuses to bow to injustice, however overwhelming the odds, however long-standing the problem.

But, the intifadah is also indicative of the restraint and political will exercised by a people that has placed its trust in the negotiating process, a trust in the efforts of the international community to seek a durable and just solution that transforms legitimate aspirations into guaranteed rights, ensures secure borders for all States and fosters peace and prosperity.

(Mr. de Marco, President, General Assembly)

Suffering and anguish have become the common heritage of all the peoples that inhabit the region. For too many years has the logic of war been permitted to sow strife and uncertainty. The appeal of the international community on such a day is for all parties to seek the determination necessary to make new bold efforts that would bring about a just and long-lasting solution. The denial of rights has now become a shared historical experience of the parties to the Middle East tragedy. That shared experience, rather than generating intransigence, hatred and belligerent sentiments, should serve as a source of inspiration to acknowledge the concept of contemporary political culture which in other regions has already borne fruit: confidence-building as a tool of co-operation to help overcome the great divide brought about by confrontation.

Our formal commemoration of solidarity with the Palestinian people is therefore not only a necessary political gesture but also a personal expression of our own individual commitment against all forms of injustice. In this perspective there is particular relevance and urgency to the question of how the new sense of international morality is going to be applied to the Palestinian question. Just as peace is indivisible, so also must the commitment to principle be indivisible.

The formula that could serve as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine has been available for a long time. Within a year of its establishment in 1975, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had prepared a set of recommendations detailing a phased process through which the various layers of the Palestinian problem, humanitarian as well as political, could be approached. The completion of that process was seen as clearing the ground for a final negotiation of a just and lasting peace in the region in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions.

(Mr. de Marco, President, General Assembly)

That negotiation would take place within the framework of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council.

At its thirty-first session in 1976 and regularly thereafter, the General Assembly gave its overwhelming approval to the recommendations of the Committee on Palestine. Furthermore, since 1981 the General Assembly has also consistently been recommending the early convening of an international conference on the Middle East in accordance with a set of principles that were again reaffirmed in last year's resolution 44/42, of 6 December 1989.

(Mr. de Marco, President, General Assembly)

It is important for us to have those facts clearly in our minds, especially at a time when the traditional turbulence of the Middle East has been further compounded by the sudden eruption of aggression in a neighbouring region.

It would be a gross injustice to the long suffering people of Palestine for any formal linkages to be established, either in the positive or the negative sense, between their problem and the crisis in the Gulf. The two problems are unrelated - historically or politically. However, we should not ignore the reality that they arouse analogous sentiments with regard to the denial of the right to sovereignty of nations and the self-determination of peoples.

The problem of Palestine, in practically the same dimensions as we know it today, has been in existence almost since the establishment of the United Nations. In addition to the countless resolutions adopted by the General Assembly dealing with the problem, there have also been a number of Security Council resolutions dealing more specifically with the question of the occupied territories and the treatment of the Palestinian people living there.

The recent consensus within the Security Council could offer new signs of hope. The sad reality remains, however, that most of the resolutions adopted in the past have yet to be implemented, especially in so far as their substantive aspects are concerned.

The people of Palestine cannot wait any longer, for whatever reason, unless the necessary international effort within the framework of the proposed peace conference is launched to deal comprehensively and effectively with their problem. This is all the more evident today, four years after the commencement of the intifadah and the escalating repression that has ensued. The hatred, violence and repeated violations of human rights we have been witnessing in the occupied territories for the last few years have today reached a critical level that is

(Mr. de Marco, President, General Assembly)

threatening to blow apart even those last remaining shreds of reason and sanity that have prevailed in that tragic region.

The General Assembly has always recognized its major responsibility in seeking to promote a peaceful and lasting solution to the problem of Palestine. That responsibility is even greater today, in the light of both the increased level of violence and bitterness that exists, and of the new potential that has emerged for co-operation on matters of peace and security. There is a new international awareness of the need to resolve rather than manipulate and foment conflicts.

It is a great humiliation in life to be denied your homeland. That humiliation is perhaps even more aggravated by the fact that you receive verbal and written support but are denied the tools which make of that support an instrument to realize rights universally declared to be inalienable.

We are not here to indict particular nations, still less particular organs of the international community. Nevertheless, we have the responsibility, acting under the authority of the General Assembly, to insist on the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East, which has been repeatedly voted for by the General Assembly and yet equally repeatedly denied in its realization.

In this Organization, we are all undergoing an important credibility test in facing the aggression in Kuwait. But we are equally facing a credibility test in the land of Palestine. It is of great concern to many in the Arab nation, and to many others throughout the world, that the efforts to bring about the international peace conference have been fruitless for decades. Still more are distressed to learn that, in the view of some, the issue of an international peace conference on the Middle East is subject to a prior solution of the aggression against Kuwait, when we have all been stating - and rightly so - that the two events have no linkage.

(Mr. de Marco, President, General Assembly)

We admire the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, Madam Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal. It gives me particular satisfaction that Malta is associated in this endeavour through its role as Rapporteur of the Committee.

I should also like to underline the gratitude of the international community to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts and intensified contact with the parties in order to try to find ways of bridging the gaps between them.

We believe, however, that the Palestinian people and its leaders - many of whom are perennial refugees in their own country and beyond, or are prisoners or strangers in other countries, friendly or otherwise - expect from us all not only the solidarity that comes from commemorations such as this, but also the solidarity of concerted action which, through the logic of persuasion, avoids the violent solution and widespread suffering, while giving expression, in an international peace conference, to the affirmation of the State of Palestine which the United Nations General Assembly once proclaimed and has never withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I now call on the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL (interpretation from French): We are gathered here to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This solemn meeting, organized in accordance with the wishes of the General Assembly, bears witness to the great importance that the United Nations attaches to the question of Palestine, the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the need to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

(The Secretary-General)

Such a settlement should be based on the following three considerations: withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied since June 1967; acknowledgement and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and, finally, a satisfactory solution to the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. In that context, the question of Jerusalem also remains of prime importance.

(The Secretary-General)

Since we last commemorated this occasion, the prospects for progress in the peace process appear, regrettably, to have diminished. A year ago I spoke of the renewed expectations generated by political developments at the end of 1988 which in turn led to important proposals aimed primarily at launching a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. I noted that while it was essential to pursue every initiative that could help bridge the gap between the parties and bring them to the negotiating table, I could not but be concerned that valuable time was passing and that the willingness to negotiate would be eroded by bitterness at events on the ground.

Unfortunately, efforts to open an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue reached an impasse in the first months of 1990. Since then the situation in the occupied territories has deteriorated, causing the Security Council to focus increasingly on the question of the safety and protection of Palestinian civilian inhabitants of the territories.

In that connection, in pursuance of the requests contained in Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), of 24 October 1990 respectively, I submitted to the Council on 31 October 1990 a report on the occupied territories. In that report I made some observations on measures the international community should take to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population. It should, however, be noted that implementing such measures will not by itself put an end to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, which is essentially political in nature.

As I said in my 31 October report, the determination of the Palestinians to persevere with the intifadah, which will soon be entering its fourth year, is evidence of their rejection of the Israeli occupation and their commitment to exercise their legitimate political rights, including self-determination.

(The Secretary-General)

It is, moreover, important to recall that the question of Palestine is at the core of the Arab-Israeli dispute, which is broader and includes many complex, interrelated issues.

In its resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989 the General Assembly called for the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

That resolution enjoyed broad support, and I am therefore all the more concerned by the current absence of any diplomatic process aimed at overcoming the obstacles to putting in place an effective negotiating process in the Middle East.

Throughout my tenure as Secretary-General I have repeatedly underscored the need for a comprehensive settlement of the problems of the region, pointing out that the deterioration of the situation in one region almost invariably has repercussions elsewhere. The Middle East as a whole continues to be the most explosive region in the world today.

In view of the grave dangers of which we are all aware, I cannot reiterate too strongly the need to revive efforts to reach a just and lasting settlement of a conflict that for decades has been a source of continuing instability and has brought immense suffering to Arabs and Israelis alike. For my part, I shall do everything in my power to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to me in this regard.

(The Secretary-General)

Madam Chairman, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under your able and dedicated leadership, has continued to work tirelessly to achieve a just solution of the question of Palestine. I take this opportunity to extend to you and to the Committee my best wishes for the success of your important endeavour.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I take this opportunity to convey to the Secretary-General the Committee's thanks for his tireless efforts to help find a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and for his constant support for the work of the Committee.

At this point the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly must leave the Chamber, owing to pressing duties to which they must attend.

Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to welcome His Excellency Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait.

I must announce that His Excellency Mr. Thomas Pickering, President of the Security Council, will be unable to participate in this meeting owing to the pressure of his other commitments. He has sent the Committee a message on behalf of the Security Council, and I call now on Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, who will read out that message.

Mr. MIRZA: The following is the message from the President of the Security Council:

"Madam Chairman, allow me in my capacity as Security Council President to express to you and to your colleagues members of the Committee, as all my predecessors in the Security Council presidency have done on this day, my appreciation for having invited me as President of the Security Council to take part in this special meeting held to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. It is indeed a great pleasure for me to [hail] this important annual event in which the international community continues to manifest its solidarity with the Palestinian people and affirm the importance it attaches to a just solution of the Palestinian problem. We fully recognize that such a solution would prove to be a decisive element in the achievement of a negotiated, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question.

"The Security Council is fully aware that the question of Palestine and the efforts to find a just solution to it remain one of the major concerns of the United Nations and of the international community as a whole, since that question involves not only the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people but also the stability of a particularly troubled region of the world and therefore international peace and security.

"As is well known, the Security Council has been closely associated with the persistent efforts aimed at finding an equitable solution to the problem of the Middle East. The Council has been called upon many times to direct its urgent attention to the crisis engendered by that conflict and its consequences. The Council has also on numerous occasions expressed its grave concern at the continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied

(Mr. Mirza)

territories and its conviction that the prevailing situation could have grave consequences for ongoing endeavours to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the area.

"The Council has recently expressed alarm at the acts of violence resulting in injuries and loss of human life in the occupied territories. However, members of the Council have noted with appreciation some initiatives undertaken in the past year. They express the hope that all relevant parties will co-operate towards the achievement of a comprehensive, peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East, particularly a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

"In this context, members of the Council have also expressed their hope that the occupying Power will act in a manner consistent with its international responsibilities, and the Council has in particular called upon the occupying Power to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

"Guided by the responsibilities conferred upon it by the Charter, the Security Council will continue its efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian people."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I call now on Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer ad interim of Palestine to the United Nations, who will read out a message from His Excellency President Yasser Arafat.

Mr. AL-KIDWA (Palestine) (interpretation from Arabic): Let me begin, Madam Chairman, by expressing my sincere thanks and appreciation to you and to all the other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for having organized this annual meeting commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

As members know, the host country, regrettably, has once again violated its international obligations under the Headquarters Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America. The host country has deliberately delayed issuing visas to Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and to other members of the delegation of Palestine. For that reason, Mr. Kaddoumi is unable for the first time in years to be here to participate in this important commemorative meeting of solidarity. I convey Mr. Kaddoumi's greetings and his heartfelt thanks for the Committee's consistent solidarity with the Palestinian people in its struggle.

In that connection, I cannot fail to note that, following consultations with many parties concerned and with many friendly and sisterly countries, we have decided to proceed with the debate on the question of Palestine in plenary meetings of the General Assembly in conformity with the agreed timetable. The only change will be that Mr. Kaddoumi's political statement will be made at the close of the debate rather than at the beginning, as is the normal practice.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

I now have the honour to read out the message from His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1990, I am pleased to address to you all, Madam Chairman, members and honoured guests, on behalf of the militant Palestinian people in our occupied Palestinian territory and wherever they may be, on behalf of my fellow members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and in my own name, the warmest of fraternal greetings and my thanks for inviting me to attend this commemoration.

"Dear brothers and sisters, you are gathered here today on this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People while our people in all the towns, villages and camps of our occupied Palestinian territory are celebrating the second anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of 15 November. It marks the close of the third year of the masssive popular national uprising - the intifadah - and the beginning of the fourth year of this uprising, blessed with the same resolve, defiance and insistence on continuing the liberation struggle until their national goals are attained and their inalienable national rights are restored and implemented, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish their independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

"Our Palestinian people, as they continue to wage their just liberation struggle, look with great hope and trust to your esteemed Committee, which represents the consensus of the international community and the United Nations

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

to support our people, appreciating the important role which it plays at the international level in making heard the voice of the Palestinian people's just struggle for the restoration of their human rights among the active and effective forces in international public opinion and international policy to the widest possible extent.

"During the past two years we have presented the Palestinian peace initiative, which has been welcomed by the entire international community, including the United States Government. We had hoped to follow up with practical steps on the path to peace, and we made overwhelming efforts in that direction. However, most regrettably, the path of peace is beset with difficulties because of the obdurate Israeli positions that rejected the constructive international efforts aimed at removing the state of tension and creating a propitious climate for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the region. Furthermore, in spite of this international consensus and the global welcome given the Palestinian peace effort, which opened the door of hope wide to a just solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel has persisted in its obdurate policy aimed at obstructing the international peace process and in its rejection of international legitimacy and international resolutions.

"Regrettably also, the Israeli policy met with support from the United States of America. Even though those Israeli plans began to evolve in numerous guises and forms and were eventually presented to us in the form of James Baker's five points, we agreed to deal with them positively. Israel, however, rejected them in its note to the United Nations, which proved to the world that Israel rejects all constructive international efforts to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"As the Israeli campaigns of massacres and crimes against our Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli army and Israeli settlers have escalated, the United States, for its part, has broken off the Palestinian-United States dialogue, thereby closing all the openings through which a ray of hope for peace might shine.

"At the same time, the Middle East crisis has become explosively critical because of the tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants, most of them from the Soviet Union, who have been settled in the occupied Palestinian territories. The region has entered a race against time; tension is escalating on the political, social, economic and security fronts.

"In this poisoned atmosphere the Arab Summit Conference was held at Baghdad to meet the Israeli and United States threat, to confront the dangers of the Jewish immigration, to preserve Arab national security and to study this situation and avert its disastrous consequences for the region as a whole. All Arabs have understood the necessity for serious and prompt action by the international community to convene the peace conference on the Middle East.

"Unfortunately, however, the indifference of the United States and its deliberate bias in dealing with the Palestinian question and the deteriorating situation in the Middle East have exacerbated tensions and created an atmosphere whose negative effects cannot be isolated. That atmosphere undoubtedly helped to spark the latest crisis - namely, the Gulf crisis - and will spark off similar crises in future if the international community does not deal with the question of Palestine justly and promptly.

"We must therefore comprehend the gravity of the repugnant Israeli massacres and crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people in the

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

occupied Palestinian territories while the world has been busy with the blazing crisis in the Gulf. The most repugnant of these was the massacre that took place at Al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem on 8 October 1990, which was followed by other massacres in the occupied territories. Was that not clear evidence of the deliberate intent of the Israeli authorities to push the situation to a total explosion in the Middle East, inasmuch as Israel was, as usual, pursuing an intense campaign of massacres, official terrorism and continuous attacks on and desecration of Christian and Islamic Holy Places?

"What is more, the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir, reaffirmed his defiance of the international community, the resolutions of the United Nations and international law when he declared his intention of building 'Greater Israel' from the Jordan River to the sea and expanding Jewish migration there. Ariel Sharon, his Minister of Housing, echoed that policy when he declared that Israel would build 15,000 housing units in Jerusalem and the other occupied Palestinian areas in order to house the new Jewish immigrants and Judaize the Holy City.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"Where is the desire for peace, and where is the hope of attaining it? On the contrary, we see the United States shedding crocodile tears for international legitimacy and its resolutions and trying to accuse others of failure to comply with them. It is the United States that obstructs the path of peace in the Middle East by virtue of its positions favouring and biased in favour of Israel, its threat to Arab security and its efforts to play the role of policeman as a substitute for the United Nations and its organs, which it would have been assumed to support in order that they might be sound instruments for the achievement of international legitimacy and the spread of peace and security in the world. Instead, the United States is concerned for its oil and economic interests in the Gulf on the spurious pretext of concern for international principles and legitimacy, whereas the United States and its allies are neglecting those international principles and legitimacy in order to protect Israel, Israel's crimes and Israeli occupation.

"How long shall we permit the double standard to continue in dealing with the resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and other international organizations?

"This is the blatant flaw created by the United States of America and those within its orbit. The United States has prevented the Security Council from discharging its responsibilities with regard to the situation in the occupied territories seven times during the period of the glorious uprising, inter alia, by using the veto six times - most recently on 31 May, when it prevented the sending of a mission of Security Council members or a mission of the Secretary-General to investigate the dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, even though it was the United States that had proposed such a mission following the Uyun Qarah massacre. It is now engaged

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in trickery to prevent the adoption of any measure against Israel, which is daily committing an offence against international peace and security and which continues to commit crimes and massacres against our people, such as the massacre at the Al-Haram al-Sharif in Arab Jerusalem, the massacres in the Gaza Strip and other crimes against our people everywhere. How can we expect peace in the Middle East region as long as the United States is playing the role of litigant and arbitrator at the same time?

"Although the situation has deteriorated because of those Israeli and United States policies and practices, the Palestine Liberation Organization still adheres to the Palestinian peace initiative that it proclaimed two years ago. That initiative is the embodiment of the peaceful will of our people and their definite desire for the establishment of a just peace in Palestine and in the Middle East region through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, and first and foremost their right to self-determination, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties involved in the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, on an equal footing, as agreed by the United Nations in its resolutions and endorsed by all the countries of the world, with the exception of Israel, supported and encouraged by the United States of America.

"Although we are preoccupied with the effort to find this just solution to the Palestinian question, the Palestine Liberation Organization has never, from the start, hesitated to present its viewpoint with boldness and farsightedness concerning attainment of a peaceful Arab solution to the Gulf

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crisis and Middle East issues, under international auspices. Accordingly, we promptly presented our thoughts and our views to the Arab Summit Conference held at Cairo. Afterwards, we followed the efforts with all our Arab brothers and believing friends to work towards a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis and to prevent military confrontation, whose consequences, if it were to occur - God forbid - would be disastrous not only for the region but for the combatants. Its social, economic, military, human and financial consequences would extend to all parts of the world and would last many years.

"We are engaged in a race against time between the peace option and the war option. Let us all strive to avert catastrophe, to promote the opportunities for peace and to create a propitious climate for conducting the constructive dialogue that will lead us to a peaceful solution to this grave crisis, particularly since international, Arab, and local agreement has emerged concerning those constructive initiatives, ideas and efforts.

"This was clear from the position of President Mitterand, the position of the European Group, the Soviet-European statement, the position of Presidents Mitterand and Gorbachev, the positions of China, Japan and many of the Islamic and African States and the non-aligned countries and even from positions within the United States itself.

"All this gives rise to hope that we may avert the catastrophe of war by arriving at a solution to all the problems of the region - the Gulf problem, the Middle East problem and the Palestinian question - in a way that protects the rights of all and the dignity and interests of all, as we have emphasized in the initiatives we have proclaimed and transmitted to many Members of the United Nations, many members of the Security Council and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"If events in the region are not contemporaneous, they are certainly interrelated. It is not possible to deal with one of them in isolation from the others. We should not undertake to solve a portion of them while the dangers loom or forget them when the storm winds temporarily abate as a result of measures that numb the nerves but do not eradicate the disease or deal with the fundamentals of the problems.

"Peace in the Middle East region begins with Palestine, and war begins with Palestine. There is a hurricane sweeping the whole region, one which will continue to confront us as long as the Arab-Israeli conflict lasts. This is our guiding premise, and there is no other to lead or guide us in tackling the Middle East conflict in a way that will ensure us security, stability and peace so that the region may assume its place and role in the international community as countries that desire security and stability for mankind, now and in the future.

"In conclusion, I wish, through this gathering, to address my warmest greetings to His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to convey to him our deep gratitude for his continuing support for the just struggle of our people and for the important and constructive role which he is playing in maintaining the prestige of the United Nations, ensuring implementation of its resolutions on the Palestinian question and unifying the standards of compliance with those resolutions in order to protect international peace and security and to uphold its principles. I also express my deep appreciation to His Excellency for his recent report on ways and means of ensuring international protection for our Palestinian people under Israeli occupation.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"I express thanks and appreciation also to the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights and all its personnel and to Her Excellency Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the significant role she plays in conducting the work of this Committee with a view to the achievement of its noble goals. I also express our gratitude to all friendly States members of the Committee and to all friendly States in the United Nations for the backing and support they give to the just struggle of our people. I wish you all continued success. I thank you personally and on behalf of the Palestinian Command and on behalf of the Palestinian people. Revolution continues until victory!"

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I would like to ask Mr. Al-Kidwa to convey our thanks to His Excellency President Yasser Arafat for his important message. I should also like to ask him to reiterate to President Arafat and, through him, to the Palestinian people, the commitment of the Committee to continue to contribute to a search for a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

It is now my honour to call upon His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait to read a message from His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait and President of the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference.

Mr. AL-SABAH (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): It is my honour to convey to you the greetings of His Highness Emir Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of the State of Kuwait and President of the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference, as well as my personal greetings and thanks to you, Madam Chairman, for your welcome to me. It is my pleasure to read to you the message of His Highness on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

"On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government and people of Kuwait extend their greetings and pay tribute to our brothers, the Palestinian people, in the Arab occupied territories and holy Al-Quds for their steadfastness in the face of Israeli occupation and brutal policies. The Government and the people of Kuwait renew their support for this heroic steadfastness of true revolutionaries, despite the abhorrent aggression of Iraq against the land and the people of Kuwait. One of the first victims of that aggression was Palestine, its cause, its people and its struggle.

"Despite the fact that many Days of Solidarity with the Palestinian People have come and gone in the past years, despite a firm international

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consensus of long date on the rights of the Palestinian people and its legitimate historical claim to self-determination, independence and the establishment of its State as prescribed in the various resolutions of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, Israel, which is bent on entrenching and perpetuating occupation and continuing the usurpation of the land and the rights of others, has prevented the realization of the hopes of international conscience - hopes to settle the question of Palestine, which is the core of the struggle in the Middle East - by a just and comprehensive solution based on international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy.

"On this occasion, we call upon all of those who advocate and support justice and the inalienable right of people to extend all material and moral support to the blessed Palestinian intifadah, now entering its fourth year. The activists of the intifadah continue to give their lives, blood and to make sacrifices for their holy land, their just struggle and their legitimate claims. Perhaps their latest heroic stand was at the painful events in Al-Quds al-Sharif a few weeks ago, events which showed to the world once again the harshness with which the Israeli forces of occupation respond to those who, under the banner of their faith and religious belief, defend the first kiblah of the Muslims and the third holy shrine of Islam.

"As the President of the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference, I wish to take this opportunity to condemn strongly these blatant Zionist attempts to encroach upon Islamic holy sites and offend the feelings of more than one billion Muslims in all parts of the world.

"The Organization of the Islamic Conference calls upon all members of the international community and its organizations to stand up to this aggression for the sake of peace and security and in fulfillment of the long-awaited

(Mr. Al-Sabah, Kuwait)

legitimate expectations of the Palestinian people. Let us all once again invoke the substance and message of the divine religions and the values of morality, which all call on our respect for the faiths and beliefs of others, and proscribe the denigration and prevention of their worship.

"On this occasion, I wish to express my greetings and appreciation to the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their sincere efforts in the service of the just cause of the Palestinian people, as well as for their active endeavours to defend the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State, with its capital, holy Al-Quds."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I call next on Mr. Daya Perera, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, to make a statement on behalf of his Committee.

Mr. PERERA (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories: On behalf of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and on my own behalf, I have the honour to convey to you this message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Special Committee, since its establishment by the General Assembly in December 1968, following the 1967 hostilities and territorial occupation by Israel, has always endeavoured to provide in its reports a faithful and accurate picture of the situation of human rights in the occupied territories during the period covered by these reports. Owing to the negative attitude of the Israeli authorities with regard to the Special Committee, and their persistent denial of co-operation, the Special Committee has once again been prevented from visiting the occupied territories and carrying out investigations on the human rights situation in situ. It has, nevertheless, strived to fulfil its mandate to the best of its abilities by reflecting in its report relevant information received both orally and in writing from a wide range of sources on the human rights situation in the occupied territories. The Special Committee has taken particular care to reply on information that has not been contradicted by the Government of Israel, including reports appearing in the Israeli press and other news media published in the occupied territories. In doing so, the Special Committee has, over the years,

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expressed the hope that the alarming picture emerging from its reports may serve to further sensitize the international community to the plight of the civilian population, while encouraging meaningful efforts to improve the human rights conditions prevailing in the occupied territories.

Having examined and analysed the information and evidence put before it, the Special Committee has reached the conclusion, as reflected in its twenty-second report to the General Assembly at its current session, that the recent further escalation of tension in the occupied territories has now reached a very dangerous level. If urgent measures are not taken to remedy the grave human rights violations, which have become a daily occurrence, and to ensure effective protection of basic human rights and freedoms, a major explosion with unforeseeable consequences might take place in the area.

During the period under review, the Israeli authorities have persisted in quelling the Palestinian uprising and, to this end, have resorted to increasingly harsh measures of repression. The indiscriminate use of violence to counter the uprising has caused the deaths of hundreds of civilians of all ages, and several thousand Palestinians have suffered injuries. Everyday life in the occupied territories has been characterized by a climate of fear and anxiety, punctuated by random acts of violence, clashes between Arab civilians and Israeli soldiers, aggression by Israeli settlers, prolonged curfew, scores of arrests, tax raids and various other measures of harassment and humiliation. Collective punishment has continued to be implemented, in flagrant violation of relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of

(Mr. Perera, Chairman, Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories)

War. One clear example is the demolition of houses for alleged security reasons, practised on a very large scale, which adversely affects many innocent families. Severe economic sanctions have also contributed to aggravating an already precarious economic and social situation.

As regards the administration of justice, serious irregularities have been observed at every level. Flagrant violations of the fundamental right of all persons to equality before the courts have been endemic. Mention must be made of the usually very long delay between arrest and trial; the practice of arresting without charges for preventive or administrative detention; the practice of extracting confessions under duress; denial of the right of lawyers to represent detainees; denial of intimation to the accused or his lawyer of the charges brought against him, and harsh sentences for minor offences. On the other hand, Israelis charged with killing or ill-treating Arab civilians usually benefit from leniency quite disproportionate to the gravity of the offence. The large number of Palestinians detained as a result of the uprising has contributed to a further aggravation of the situation, and has adversely affected the treatment of prisoners. Detainees held in various prisons and detention camps, sometimes even inside Israel itself, often in overcrowded cells lacking adequate facilities, have been subjected to various forms of physical or psychological torture or ill-treatment.

The policy of expelling Palestinians from the occupied territories for alleged security reasons has continued to be implemented, in violation of the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In addition, hundreds of Palestinian

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women and children without valid residence permits have been expelled, during a period of several months, in a very harsh and humiliating way. This practice was halted only after a wave of protest by the international community. During the period under review, Israel also continued to settle new immigrants in the occupied territories, in spite of a mounting wave of criticism by the international community.

Fundamental freedoms have continued to be restricted through severe limitations affecting the enjoyment of the rights of freedom of movement, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of education. The long-term effects of prolonged closures of academic institutions, provoking a deterioration of academic standards and psychological stress in the educational process, are particularly disturbing.

Finally, the Israeli authorities have continued to implement their policy of annexation and the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories, in flagrant violation of the international obligation of Israel as a State Party to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The situation in the occupied territories has further deteriorated since the adoption of the Special Committee's twenty-second report. In addition, violence and repression have reached a climax in recent months, as clearly illustrated by the killing in Jerusalem, on 8 October 1990, of over 20 Palestinians and the wounding of several hundreds of others by Israeli police forces and armed Israeli civilians, in what was described as the bloodiest day since the start of the uprising nearly three years ago. This tragedy, which aroused a wave of shock and

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reprobation in the international community, led to the unanimous condemnation by the Security Council of the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces.

In view of such dramatic developments, I should like, together with my two colleagues of the Special Committee, to appeal once more to the international community to assume its responsibility towards the Palestinian people by providing adequate safeguards for the realization of its legitimate rights and by implementing urgent measures for the alleviation of its plight.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): It is a pleasure for me now to call on Mr. Darco Silovic, the permanent representative of Yugoslavia to the United Nations and representative of the Acting Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, who will read a message from His Excellency Mr. Borisav Jovic, President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Mr. SILOVIC (Yugoslavia): It is my distinct honour to address this meeting on behalf of Yugoslavia, current Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I should like to voice once again the unwavering solidarity of non-aligned countries with the Palestinian people in the endeavour to realize its inalienable right to self-determination and a life in peace in its own State.

This year we are observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in a situation of dangerous developments in the region and the escalation of repression in the occupied Palestinian territories. Therefore, this is the right occasion and place to reiterate the importance of, and need for, an adequate contribution of all international factors to the peace process, coupled with effective protection of the Palestinian people.

The non-aligned countries have worked untiringly to promote the peace process in the region. In this context, consultations have been held with influential factors in the Middle East crisis, such as China, the United States, the Soviet Union and the European Community, which have reflected a growing readiness to contribute to the efforts at reaching a durable, just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question.

There is a consensus that the Middle East peace process has entered an important and critical stage. It is therefore the right moment, in the view of the non-aligned countries, for the entire international community to rededicate itself to convening the International Peace Conference and to bringing the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict to the negotiating table. This would be the most telling expression of international solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In the endeavour to achieve these goals, the non-aligned countries attach special importance to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, whose activities, under your able chairmanship, Madam Chairman, have always been widely supported by the non-aligned countries.

May I now read out the message from the President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Mr. Borisav Jovic, sent to the Committee on the occasion of this important Day. It reads as follows:

"The International Day of Solidarity is being observed at a time of fundamental world changes conducive to the establishment of a new system of international relations. However, certain problems remain unresolved, and new threats to international peace and security are emerging.

"This holds particularly true of the Middle East crisis, the crux of which is the Palestinian question. With the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, the Middle East region, already plagued with many problems, has become even more unstable. Despite the formidable dangers inherent in developments in the Gulf region, international public attention must not be diverted from the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian problem as the core of the crisis which continues to be a source of tension.

"It is heartening to note the growing international consensus on the basic principles concerning the solution of the Palestinian issue. The Security Council should, we believe, seize this opportunity and proceed to the preparations for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

"The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries attaches great importance to the revitalization and furtherance of the Middle East peace process. The position adopted by Yugoslavia and other non-aligned countries is that a solution can be found only on the basis of the full realization of the legitimate right of

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the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the establishment of its own State; withdrawal of Israel from all territories occupied since 1967; the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.

"The recent tragic events in the occupied territories call for urgent action by the international community and the Security Council with a view both to effective protection of the Palestinian population and to reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem.

"The role of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is particularly important in that respect. Yugoslavia and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries fully support the activities of the Committee and stand ready to continue to co-operate with it closely and to co-ordinate the efforts aimed at achieving the common goal.

"We avail ourselves of this opportunity to reiterate the solidarity of Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement with the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people for the exercise of its inalienable rights, led by the Palestine Liberation Organization as its legitimate representative."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I now call on Ambassador Abdulmalek Ismail Mohamed, Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. ISMAIL MOHAMED (League of Arab States) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset, Madam Chairman, to pay tribute to your unceasing efforts and your country's position on the just and rightful claims of the Palestinian people to its inalienable right to self-determination.

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

It is my honour on this most important occasion to express on behalf of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its delegation to the United Nations our thanks and appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its unceasing endeavours to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and to establish its own independent State.

This meeting of solidarity with the Palestinian people is a clear and unambiguous expression by the international community, as represented in this international Organization, of its support for the right of the Palestinian people in its legitimate struggle to realize its inalienable national rights, as reaffirmed by many United Nations resolutions.

Furthermore, this meeting for solidarity is yet another clear rejection by the international community of the policy of Israel, which refuses to abide by United Nations resolutions, ignores them, and persists in its inhuman practices against the Palestinian people. The blessed Palestinian intifadah, which is escalating and becoming stronger as it nears its fourth year, will not cease; it will continue, however violent and extreme the Israeli acts of repression may be.

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

The massacres perpetrated by the Israeli authorities, which have become clear and obvious, in the Gaza Strip and the holy city of Al-Quds will not weaken the Palestinian people. On the contrary, they will be a further incentive to the stone-throwing children to continue their struggle until certain victory is soon achieved. The acts of repression and genocide perpetrated against the Palestinian people and witnessed by all in the occupied territories these days require effective, practical measures by the Committee to protect those people. Expressions of solidarity and resolutions of support are no longer sufficient; there must be a practical development in the field by the United Nations in order to guarantee the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States believes that there must be urgent movement by the international community to guarantee protection as a minimum to the Palestinian people until it realizes its right to self-determination and the establishment of its independent State, as approved by the United Nations and reaffirmed in many United Nations resolutions.

The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States calls for the implementation of United Nations resolutions and for compelling Israel to respect and implement those resolutions, in accordance with the principle of respect for international legitimacy. It is a principle that the United Nations has lately begun to apply and that the Security Council is beginning to implement. We believe that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People bears a clear responsibility to call on the Security Council to begin taking practical measures to guarantee the protection of the Palestinian people until it realizes its right to self-determination and independence.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): It is now my great pleasure to call on Ms. Jeanne Butterfield, Chairman of the North American Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and representative of the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.

Ms. BUTTERFIELD (International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine): I am honoured to address the Committee today on behalf of the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine on this historic and solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

As non-governmental organizations which have been involved with the United Nations in working on the question of Palestine, we reaffirm on this occasion our total support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in its continuing struggle for freedom and independence, as expressed in the intifadah and by all other internationally legitimate means. As we approach the third anniversary of the intifadah, we commend the Palestinian people in its heroic struggle to end the occupation and to implement the proclamaton of 15 November 1988 of the independent State of Palestine. We call upon all Governments to recognize the State. We call for full international support for the intifadah. We strongly uphold the support of the people of the intifadah for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We strongly affirm that the continuing denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is entirely unacceptable and constitutes a major danger to peace.

(Ms. Butterfield, International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine)

We, as non-governmental organizations, have continued to work over the past year to educate our own public and to press our own Governments to support these principles as well. Nearly a year ago we joined together in a historic peace march in Jerusalem, a march which was harshly repressed by Israeli forces. We continued throughout the year to educate and agitate, to teach and to organize, to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and the Israeli peace forces, and to insist that our own Government officials respond to our concerns.

We have seen modest gains in our work over the past year. More non-governmental organizations have joined our network. More people have been reached with our publications and events. More Government officials around the world have received our petitions and listened to our pleas. But we are painfully aware as we come here today that the objective situation has changed for the worse for the Palestinian people, over the past year.

The United States Government on 31 May 1990 vetoed the otherwise unanimously approved Security Council draft resolution to send a United Nations fact-finding mission to the occupied Palestinian territory. On 20 June the United States suspended its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization, further undermining constructive steps towards a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Meanwhile, the Israeli Government's policy of settling Jews in the occupied Palestinian territories and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, continued to accelerate. Our call on all States around the world concerned with Jewish emigration to guarantee that such emigration does not lead to settlement in the occupied territories will not infringe upon the rights of Palestinians either in Israel or occupied Palestine, and will not infringe upon the Palestinian right of return, has gone unheeded.

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And of course most recently, the massacre of Palestinians at the Al-Haram Al-Shareef and the subsequent Israeli Government cover-up of this incident have demonstrated once again to the world that Israeli intransigence, Israeli violence and the Israeli project of confiscation and annexation of Palestinian land and repression of Palestinian people is accelerating in spite of international opinion.

We are also painfully aware as non-governmental organizations as we gather here today that the threat of war looms large in the Arabian Gulf, and that the Palestinian people will only suffer more should such a war break out. We non-governmental organizations have been working with other peace organizations around the world to voice our opposition to a United States-led war in the Gulf. We have also been vocal in condemning the double standard of the United States Government, which has for many years encouraged and helped Israeli occupation and annexation of Arab territory, while it now loudly denounces the Iraqi occupaton of Kuwait.

We reaffirm our total opposition to any acquisition of territory by force. We note the power the United Nations has exercised to enforce Security Council resolution 660 (1990), and we call upon it to exert equal efforts to enforce all other United Nations resolutions concerning the acquisition of territory by force, as part of a comprehensive Middle East settlement. We call for all Middle East issues to be dealt with on an equal basis and in accordance with international law. We welcome the peace initiative by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and all other initiatives by the Palestine Liberation Organization and by members of the League of Arab States, in particular.

(Ms. Butterfield, International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine)

Perhaps the most urgent concern we as non-governmental organizations have as we gather here today relates to the need of the Palestinians for international protection until such time as they can live free in their own independent State. We note that Israel is designated as an occupying Power in Security Council resolutions. We strongly support the recommendation of the Secretary-General that a meeting be convened of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order that those parties may determine how to exercise their responsibility under the Convention to provide for the protection of the Palestinian people. We remind all signatories of the Fourth Geneva Convention of their contracted obligation to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances and to bring to justice persons committing or ordering to be committed grave breaches of the Convention. We further call for the establishment on an urgent basis by the Security Council of an effective United Nations presence with a legal mandate to protect the population of the occupied Palestinian territory.

For our part we, as non-governmental organizations, are mounting an international campaign for protection of the Palestinian people. We will do our utmost not only to work through appropriate United Nations and Government channels but also to provide the kind of protection that we as non-governmental organizations can provide by our delegations, our witness, our physical presence if necessary, even trying to act as human shields of protection for the Palestinian people, much as the Witness for Peace delegations have done in Nicaragua, as the accompaniment volunteers have done in El Salvador, as the Women's Peace Encampments have done in the United States at nuclear and munitions sites and as European peace forces are now attempting to do on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti-Saudi border.

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We have noted the refusal of the Israeli Government to respond to the demands of the international community and we call for the application of effective international political and economic sanctions against Israel to ensure respect for the rights of the Palestinian people. We know that if the international community can act to impose measures against Iraq to compel it to withdraw from Kuwait, then surely such pressures can and should be applied to Israel to compel it to withdraw from Palestine.

We also note with dismay the agenda of the Security Council for today. To change this day of world mobilization for the just cause of the Palestinian people and for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 181 (III) concerning the creation of two States in Palestine into a day of a Security Council meeting to study the possibility of military aggression in the Gulf without having exhausted all diplomatic resources sounds to non-governmental organizations around the world like provocation. Earlier this week, non-governmental organizations requested the Secretary-General to postpone the meeting of the Security Council and to add to its agenda the convening of the international conference for peace in the Middle East called for in General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989.

We recognize that the need for the international peace conferene, for which we have worked for many of the past seven years in a concerted fashion, has never been more urgent. We have also, therefore, embarked on an international campaign of letters directed at the five permanent members of the Security Council urging them immediately to convene the international conference. We will be meeting with representatives from those five countries late next month to press our concerns directly. We should like to share the strikingly simple thought of one of our

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non-governmental organization members. Matti Peled, an Israeli who has participated in our non-governmental organization symposiums several times over the past several years, recently wrote

"All that President Bush need do is ask the Secretary-General to convene an international peace conference and to send invitations to Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Arab States and the super-Powers. No Israeli Government, however tough its rhetoric, would risk the total diplomatic isolation attendant upon staying out of such a conference".

The Palestinian intifadah is the concrete ongoing expression of the Palestinian people's opposition to occupation. Israeli General Dan Shomron has publicly stated that the only way to crush the intifadah is through mass deportations, starvation or genocide. A significant sector of Israeli society advocates a final solution to the Palestine question, that of transfer. While outright transfer has not yet taken place, a covert policy of transfer is being implemented through massive Soviet Jewish immigration, through massacres, through mass arrests, through house demolitions, through rejection of family unification, through continued closure of schools and universities, through increased taxation, and through all the other means of crushing the intifadah which try to make it impossible for the Palestinian people to stay on their land and which try to force them to depart in order to survive.

The Israeli leadership is now talking about "separation". We want them to talk peace; we want them to talk freedom and independence. We want them to end the occupation. We have the means, by implementing sanctions or by simply convening the international peace conference, to accomplish that goal. But the longer we

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wait the more possible another outcome is. It is up to us. Each of us - non-governmental organizations and Governments alike - must act.

For our part, we as non-governmental organizations throughout the world commit ourselves to redoubling our efforts and solidarity with the Palestinian people, efforts which must and will continue until Palestine is free.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I would ask Ms. Butterfield to transmit to the Co-ordinating Committee our thanks for the support that non-governmental organizations have always lent to the work of the Committee.

We have just heard the last speaker on the list. It is now my honour to announce that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has received messages of support and solidarity from many Heads of State or Government, from many Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Governments and organizations. I shall read out the list of those who have sent such messages. The text of the messages we have received will be published in the special bulletin to be prepared by the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(The Chairman)

The following is the list of messages we have received:

From Heads of State: His Excellency Mr. Najibullah, President of the Republic of Afghanistan; His Highness Sheikh Isa Bin Sulman Al-Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain; His Excellency Mr. Hussain Muhammad Ershad, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; His Excellency Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria; His Excellency Mr. André Kolingba, President of the Central African Republic; His Excellency Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and the Government of the Republic of Cuba; His Excellency Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus; His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt; His Excellency Air Captain Jerry John Rawlings, Head of State and President of the Provisional National Defence Council of Ghana; His Excellency Brigadier General Lansana Conté, President of the Republic of Guinea; His Excellency Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran; His Excellency Mr. Saddam Hussein, President of the Republic of Iraq; His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; His Excellency Mr. Kim Il Sung, President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; His Excellency General Moussa Traore, Secretary-General of the Democratic Union of the Malian People and President of the Republic of Mali; Her Excellency Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino, President of the Republic of the Philippines; His Highness Sheikh Khalife bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar; His Highness King Fahd bin Abulaziz Al Saud, Guardian of the Two Sanctuaries and King of Saudi Arabia; His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal; His Excellency Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka; His Excellency General Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, Chairman of the National Salvation Revolution Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Sudan; His Excellency Mr. Ramsewak Shankar, President of the

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Republic of Suriname; His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia; His Excellency Mr. Yoweri K. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity; His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates; and His Excellency Mr. Ali Hassan Mwinyi, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

From Heads of Government: His Excellency Mr. Li Peng, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China; His Excellency Mr. Chandra Sekhar, Prime Minister of India; His Excellency Mr. Edward Fenech-Adami, Prime Minister of Malta; His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; His Excellency Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, President of the Government of Spain; His Excellency General Chatichai Choonhavan, Prime Minister of Thailand; His Excellency Mr. Yildirim Akbulut, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey; His Excellency Father Walter Lini, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu and His Excellency Mr. Do Muoi, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

From Ministers for Foreign Affairs: His Excellency Mr. Enrique Silva Cimma, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile; His Excellency Mr. Antonis Samaras, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece; His Excellency Mr. Taro Nakayama, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan; His Excellency Mr. Choe Ho-chung, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea; His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Mohammed al-Bashari, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; His Excellency Mr. Hasni Ould Didi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania; His Excellency Mr. Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman; His Excellency Mr. Farouq Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the

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Syrian Arab Republic; and His Excellency Mr. Anatoly M. Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The following Governments have sent messages: Argentina and Mexico.

The Committee has also received messages from: Mr. Salim A. Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The following non-governmental organizations have sent messages: the International Progress Organization; the United Nations Association of Sweden and the Israeli Council for Israel-Palestinian Peace.

On behalf of the Committee, I sincerely thank the Heads of State or Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Governments and organizations whose names I have read out. I also thank all participants in today's meeting for their sustained efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and for the support they have always provided for the aims and activities of the Committee.

The statements we have heard and the messages of solidarity we have received once more indicate the international community's determination to make progress towards peace in the Middle East through the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, especially its right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent Arab State of Palestine in accordance with General Assembly resolution 181 (III), whose forty-third anniversary we commemorate today.

We have taken note of the growing concern aroused by the increase in Israeli repression in the occupied Palestinian territories and of the growing feeling throughout the international community that there is an urgent need to ensure the protection and security of the Palestinian people under occupation. The international consensus in favour of urgently convening an international conference

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on peace in the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/42 has once again been clearly reaffirmed.

The members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will spare no effort to attain those objectives, which are of such great importance both for the Palestinian people and for peace and security in the entire region.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who made it possible for us to organize today's meeting and who worked with such commitment and even-handedness. I refer to the staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights, of the Department of Conference Services and of the Department of Public Information, not to mention all those who work to see to our security.

I remind participants that the exhibit arranged by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will be opened formally at 2.45 p.m. in the lobby of the General Assembly building.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.